

Thu 6/10/2010, 11:51 AM

You

Dear Peer,

I have owed you a letter of gratitude for a long time. In all, I visited 35 colleges and universities in Asia, and three of you students Miao Ying, Ma Qiousha and Ma Gang made my visits to Shanghai and Beijing very useful, and introduced me to many of their fellow students, who were also helpful, to galleries, and of course to Pei Li who met with me in S, made arrangements for me to see all of his work (and get copies) at his gallery in Beijing, and in New York City. I realize that none of this would have been possible without all of the time and energy of your colleague Xiaowen Chen, and I hope that you will thank him again for me. I shall report to you in person about the visits, and, as I am making a longer written report to Nanyang Technological University in Singapore, not yet finished, I will be sure to send you a copy. Vibeke Sorensen at NTU is very hopeful that you may visit her there, and we can talk about when that would be convenient for you.

In one of your e-mails (March 15, 2010), you mentioned that you felt that there was a special relationship between Binghamton (Owego) and Buffalo. I completely agree; it had little to do with me, although I was very cognizant of it. From our very first meetings, Woody Vasulka preached to me about the importance of the Center for Experimental Television; he thought that Media Study/Buffalo was an access center for beginners and an exhibition center, and that Ralph was at the center of research. I remember meeting Woody in NYC once and his insisting on driving me to see Ralph,

buying the special meats and breads and wines which were his forte, and then, when we arrived, preparing them so that I could listen to Ralph, and, hopefully, from Woody's point of view, learn what I should be doing. Of course, I had known Ralph from our service on the New York State Council of the Arts Media Panel in its first days, at a time when Ralph himself had an access center and was showing videotapes made by young African Americans, and I had admired his efforts and always supported his proposals. At Buffalo, I thought it wiser to remain true to my original thrusts, as I thought they related to the needs of that city, but I did make sure that we had a Rutt-Etra, a Hearn, etc. This was easier to do because Woody and Steina, through the Vasulka Corporation, housed a few blocks away at 257 Franklin (it took me three minutes to get there from 207 Delaware), were receiving NYSCA funding for their designers and new technical developments in manipulating the electronic image. These designers, as you know, often worked at Ralph's, including Davy Jones, Walter Wright, Don MacArthur and others, crossing the Canadian border, and Jean Pierre Boyer from Montreal also came to spend a year in Buffalo, and later held the first exhibition of machines modifying the image in Montreal. Later, at the invitation of Jacques Ledoux at the Belgian Royal Film Archives, we brought the makers, their machines and their tapes to Knokke-Heist in Belgium, the location of that famous picture which is published as the frontispiece in *Pioneers of Electronic Art (Eigenwelt der Apparat-Welt)*. And then came Open Circuits at MOMA at which John McHale, then at Binghamton, gave one of the talks. Later, Jon Burris, who then worked at Media Study/Buffalo, began to record conversations between the Vasulkas and Buffalo makers and Ralph and Binghamton people,

and these are preserved in the Vasulka Archives and I am recently met Burris in London and can put you in touch with him. As you know, many people are responding to my request about the origins of the Digital Arts Lab, and we will see if anyone remembers that Hollis made videotapes at Binghamton or that he used the Paik synthesizer there, all recorded in an early Anthology Film Archives list of video showings.

I should think that the careers of Ken and Larry should also be included. Each came to Buffalo on several occasions, and I have audio recordings of their presentations, as well as a long oral history interview of Ken by Stan Brakhage. Ken's importance in New York City at FilmmakersCoop, Millenium, and other venues needs to be recorded, and I have interviews with others (Snow by Frampton) where his influence on and importance to Wavelength is discussed. Perhaps you should organize a conference or reunion about that Department, or publish an essay about it in a Binghamton magazine or write a long essay. I hope that KATHY HIGH has included the ETVC in her book. I should be glad to cooperate and provide materials, memories, etc., and I should think that you could get very useful interviews with Woody and Ralph and Sherry. I think that John Minkowsky would also cooperate. I was told that David James of USC was doing a collection of essays "by divers hands" on Ken, and, as you probably know, Tom Gunning at the University of Chicago did a catalogue on Ken for the Museum of the Moving Image in New York, and there are many columns by Jonas Mekas, and audiotapes of appearances of Ken and Larry at Millenium. I am wondering what has been saved of the department's papers, curricula, screenings,

etc.by the University - I came for a

conference to see Nick Ray, and observe a Ken Jacobs "debate" with Ricky Leacock. Ken and Larry and Ralph must have their own papers. Lots to do, and we might discuss how to do it. There is no question that Binghamton was an important seminal place and contributed to the whole East Coast. One scholar who might be interested is the Canadian Michael Zryd.

At Buffalo, you introduced Minkowsky and me to your colleague, Gerar Edizel, but we didn't follow up. Perhaps you can describe his projects and activities to me, and even bring some of his publications.

Gerry.